EXHIBIT 4

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EXCLUSIVE U.S.

EPA Calls on Telecom Executives to Meet About Lead-Sheathed Phone Cables

Agency reports finding more than 100 readings with elevated lead near cables in 'high priority' probe; companies say their own tests show low lead levels

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The Environmental Protection Agency in Washington. PHOTO: GABRIELLA DEMCZUK FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The Environmental Protection Agency sent letters requesting telecom companies to meet with the agency about their lead-sheathed phone cables, in a new phase of an investigation in the EPA's efforts to protect the public from potential lead hazards.

The agency's move comes on the heels of the EPA finding more than 100 soil and sediment readings with lead above the regulator's safety guideline for children at some phone lead-cable sites identified by The Wall Street Journal in three states.

"This is lead that could be concerning" based on factors like "exposure and pathways" into the body, said Clifford Villa, head of the EPA's "Superfund" office that cleans up contaminated sites, in an interview with the Journal. The preliminary data from the agency's sampling supports the EPA determination that the investigation of lead telecom cables is a "high priority," said Grant Cope, senior counselor to EPA Administrator Michael Regan. Both officials are helping oversee the EPA's investigation.

The EPA determined that the lead found near each cable location doesn't require an emergency response or constitute an immediate health threat, partly because many spots where the agency tested were covered by grass, which the agency said could act as a barrier to reduce exposure. The EPA's own handbook for lead-contaminated residential sites says grass cover isn't always a permanent or protective remedy to guard against lead hazards over time.

Assessing whether an emergency response is needed is often the first stage of a multistep Superfund review process that also examines whether any other longer-term remedies should be undertaken. The agency plans to collect more data as part of the investigation, including analysis and further testing to determine whether the elevated lead levels it has found near the cables came directly from them.

Eighty-six of the 202 samples near the cable tested by the EPA exceeded 400 parts per million, the agency's recommendation for levels of lead it believes are generally safe in soil where children play.

Lead readings in West Orange, New Jersey

The Journal in July reported that telecom giants have left behind more than 2,000 lead-sheathed telephone cables laid decades ago across the U.S. and that as the lead degrades, it can end up in places where Americans live, work and play.

The EPA launched an investigation into the cables and has put together a national working group that has been meeting regularly to assess agency and company sampling data and documents.

Note: Map excludes background samples taken across the street from the cable.
Sources: Google Earth (satellite image); Environmental Protection Agency (locations)

In letters sent in December to AT&T T -1.72% ▼ and Verizon VZ -1.79% ▼ executives and assembled by the EPA's enforcement and Superfund divisions, the agency asked to discuss the companies' granular sampling data related to their legacy lead cables at a meeting at EPA headquarters in Washington this month.

Verizon referred requests for comment to USTelecom, an industry group, which said in a statement: "Our industry has been engaging with the EPA and our companies look forward to meeting with the EPA to discuss agency and industry testing results. We will continue to follow the science, which has not identified that lead-sheathed telecom cables are a leading cause of lead exposure or the cause of a public health issue."

In a statement, AT&T said: "We will continue to work collaboratively with the EPA as it undertakes its review of lead-clad telecommunications cables. We look forward to the opportunity to meet with the EPA to discuss recent testing and other evidence that contradicts the Wall Street Journal's assertions."

AT&T, Verizon and other telecom companies with legacy lead cables have said the cables pose no public health hazard and aren't a major contributor to environmental lead, considering the existence of other sources of lead closer to people's homes. They have said they take health and safety seriously and have pursued their own testing at various cable sites, including in Michigan, California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. They have said their testing has shown low levels of lead consistent with "background" readings of lead in soil.

Over the past few months, EPA testing in three states near some telecom lead-cable locations identified by the Journal found 101 results, or 41% of the samples taken near lead cables, exceeded the EPA's lead-safety guideline for children. The elevated results were found at 95 of the 235 distinct sites tested by the agency and included 99 sediment and soil samples. Two EPA results were from an X-ray

fluorescence spectrometer—a device used by scientists to measure elements in soil—where there wasn't enough soil to sample.

The agency said in a statement it would collect more data, assess the condition of the lead sheaths and determine how lead from the cables could be dispersed into the environment to better "assess the risks to communities where these cables are located."

The EPA letters to the companies also outlined other potential agenda items for the coming meeting, including discussions about technical reports related to the companies' testing and sampling. EPA officials are seeking to have the companies explain and answer questions that the agency has about the companies' data, an EPA official said.

The EPA is coordinating closely with the Justice Department, whose Southern District of New York is investigating whether telecom companies had knowledge of any potential risks to their workers and future environmental impact when they left behind the lead cables, the Journal previously reported. The DOJ has requested data from the companies, including a list of their lead-cable locations around the country, a person briefed on the investigation said.

A spokesman for the Justice Department's SDNY declined to comment.

The EPA said in its statement that the companies have submitted "limited data" in response to separate information requests from the EPA and Justice Department. The EPA said it is working with the DOJ and state agencies to "access existing information about these cable networks" and determine "whether further actions may be required to address risks from the lead-containing cables."

AT&T, Verizon and other telecom companies say they follow regulatory safety guidelines for workers dealing with lead and offer robust training and resources, including blood-lead testing for workers. They have said they are cooperating with regulatory investigations.

The EPA tested locations identified by the Journal, in West Orange, N.J., southwest Pennsylvania and Louisiana. In these locations, the EPA found 86, six and nine test results, respectively, in which lead exceeded 400 parts per million,

the agency's current recommendation for levels of lead it believes are generally safe in soil where children play.

The EPA has proposed toughening the safety guidelines for lead in soil where children play; the guidelines recently cleared review by the Office of Management and Budget. The EPA is expected to announce the new guidance in the coming weeks.

In West Orange, where a lead-sheathed cable hangs across the street from an elementary school, 86, or 43% of the 202 samples near the cable tested by the EPA exceeded the 400-parts-per-million level. Two of those tests found lead at 3,300 parts per million or higher.

In Pennsylvania, six of 31, or 19% of the samples near a lead cable tested by the EPA exceeded the 400-parts-per-million guideline. In Louisiana, nine of 16, or 56%, of the EPA readings exceeded that level.

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